

# CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 287.

SATURDAY, JULY 2, 1859.

PRICE 1½d.

## THROUGH THE FLOODS IN PIEDMONT.

WHILE on my travels, the autumn before last, I was called back from Milan to England. I made my way by the route of Novara, Mortara, and Alessandria, from the late head-quarters of the Austrian army, to the fortress round whose walls the French and Sardinian armies were but now assembled. If my readers care to hear of the difficulties of that journey, they will easily understand why the Austrians should have been willing to forego any advantage that might have been gained by moving forward through the floods.

It was late in the October of 1857, when the *vetturino*, with the huge pile of luggage at the top, turned the corner of the Strada dei tre Alberghi, and disappeared. It contained all my travelling-companions, who went on to spend the winter at Rome, leaving me at Milan, to make my way back alone to London. I turned into the Albergo Reale forlorn and disconsolate, and was presented by the porter with my pass from the police—a temporary substitute for a passport, until I should reach the English consulate at Turin.

I received it not without joy, for the *chef* at the bureau of police in the morning had felt himself quite master of the situation; and, after displaying the usual amount of Austrian incivility, had shewn considerable acuteness in taking objections to the validity of my father's passport, on which the safety of the whole family depended.

The two preceding days had been rainy, so a gleam of sunshine tempted me to climb up once more to the cupola of the cathedral. There are days when from the cathedral of Milan you can see the wall of snowy Alps on the north, and the range of Apennines on the south, bounding the broad plain of Lombardy. But though the sun was bright, the horizon was still heavy with rain-clouds, and both Alps and Apennines were veiled from view.

The roof of the cathedral is—I trust we may now read *was*—a favourite lounge of the Austrian soldiers, who come up here to smoke their pipes, to expectorate on the heads of the population below, and to look down, like sailors from a ship's top, upon 'the waveless plain of Lombardy.' It is pleasant to them to see the fields of Indian corn edged with endless rows of pollard mulberries, on the deep pastures and water-meadows, and the rice-grounds along the river-banks, of all which they are, at this present writing, the masters. It is not unpleasant to them to see Novara in the distance, the scene of their last victory. There are, too, some other battle-fields, a little nearer,

such as Pavia and Lodi; but they are not so fresh in the soldiers' memories.

After sufficiently enjoying the beautiful to look at, I went in search of the good to eat at the *table-d'hôte*; fortified myself for my journey, and at midnight started in the *coupé* of the diligence for Ticino, in company with an enthusiastic sportsman with a double-barrelled gun, the 21st of October being the first day of woodcock-shooting in Lombardy. At the frontier, the Austrian examination of passports delayed us half an hour. Crossing the Ticino, which was running with a full stream through all the eleven arches of the Ponte Nuovo, a fine granite bridge, 1000 feet in length, we were again delayed an hour at the town of Ticino, on the Sardinian side, while our baggage was being searched. Here we were met by the news that the floods were out, in consequence of the late heavy rains, and the railway between Novara and Turin impassable; so that travellers for Turin would have to go round by Alessandria—just double the distance; and when we reached Novara, yet worse news awaited us.

Novara is a species of Crewe, differing from it in that it is an Italian town with an old Lombard cathedral; but resembling it in this, that it is a centre where four lines of railway meet, from Maggiore on the north, from Alessandria on the south, from Ticino on the east, and from Turin on the west, and in ordinary times exactly the place for a *blâsé* tourist, because you can get away from it so easily; but now every line, except that by which we had arrived, had been rendered impassable by the rains. The northern line was broken at Sesto Calende; while the river Po had just carried away a bridge at Settimo, on the western line, and an embankment at Torreberetti, between us and Alessandria—not to mention that the line between Turin and Alessandria was also up. In short, a large portion of the 'waveless plain' was under water, and the roads as impassable as the railways.

The inns at Novara were full of English travellers, who had all started hopefully the preceding day for Genoa, had arrived within a few miles of Alessandria, and been compelled to turn back again, in consequence of the water on the line threatening to put out the fire of the engine, in which case they would have become a fixture in the middle of the floods. The train was backed to Valenza, and the travellers returned safely to Novara. But, alas, in the hurry, the luggage-van was left behind at Valenza. Two hours after their return to Novara, the railway embankment gave way at Torreberetti, and an impassable gulf was fixed between them and their luggage. In the retreat, the baggage was lost.

The station at Novara was a mournful sight: elderly gentlemen stood on the platform, gazing down the line, to see, like sister Ann, if anything was coming; but in vain. They wandered recklessly about on the rails; and the officials did not interfere, for there was no chance of their being run over. They cast jealous looks at my one carpet-bag, for I was the only Englishman in Novara who had a razor. I was a man looked up to, and my acquaintance cultivated.

Life at Novara was something like life at a watering-place in England; every two hours we went down to the station and turned our faces to the floods, in hopes to see, not the steamer, but a train come in. The platform was the fashionable promenade. At night we went in desperation to the theatre; people in misfortune often do, but only the heaviest affliction could drive a man to a theatre which smelt as the theatre at Novara did. Next morning, when I asked the landlord for news, he replied: 'Niente.' When I inquired after the railway trains, he still used the hated phrase, *tutti suppressi*. We began to feel like caged starlings; common misfortune drew us together; and a triple alliance was formed between a fellow-countryman whom we will call Scot, an elderly silk-merchant of Friuli, and myself. Scot and I breakfasted at the station, he with his face turned to Valenza, where his luggage was. Poor fellow! he was haunted by the idea that a saffron tint was spreading over his shirt-front.

While at breakfast, we were informed that the telegraph between us and Alessandria had suddenly become dumb, and that they were about to shut up the station-house. A feeling of desperation came over me; I ordered a glass of a liqueur advertised on the wall as 'Costume.' It was rank aniseed. We walked back into the town again, and spent an hour in the market-place. It was a comfort to see that there was no chance of starvation; capsciums and peppers, vegetables and fruits of every description, were piled in heaps. The countrywomen were standing in double ranks, back to back, each with her basket on her arm, and her poultry on the ground in front of her. The ducks were tied together by the legs, and lay prone on the ground quacking without ceasing; the turkeys stood demurely by the side of their mistresses, and dressed the line like Austrian soldiers, apparently overwhelmed by their impending fate; the pairs of young white pigeons sat side by side in little baskets, or were carried by the wings in the hand. The women's head-dresses were a great resource for us spectators—a gaudy kerchief tied over a buy-a-broom-shaped framework, to which it is fastened by a large metal pin in front. Some wore a skewer through the back-part, with a silver bead at each end, the size of a very elongated hen's egg. Every description of silver knob was to be seen among these family jewels, donned for market-day, and all equally heavy and inelegant.

In the market-place, the news reached us that a train was starting at 10 A.M. to Torreberetti, to take workmen down to try and stop the breach in the embankment. A council of war was held. Scot and I determined to go by the train as far as it went, and then to try and make our way through the floods: the silk-merchant, Mercator Metuens, hung back. He urged that it would be hopeless to leave Novara until the post-office received letters from Turin; then we should know that the passage was feasible; that the post was stopped, and it was absurd to suppose that we could do what the government, with all its resources, could not. To which Scot replied, that Heaven helped those who helped themselves, but not those Italians who waited for somebody in authority to help them; that we would go to Torreberetti by the train, and view the floods, and

try whether it was not possible to get on by boat or carts; and that, at any rate, we should get more excitement than by stopping at Novara. Mercator was not to be roused either by taunts or arguments. He replied that he was sixty years of age, and did not mean to be drowned yet, and that we were young and foolish; and he gave us his blessing, and went back to his inn.

So I invested four francs in a vast purple cotton umbrella with a rich border—the umbrella of the country; shouldered my carpet-bag thereon, and pointed out to Scot, as we walked down to the station for the last time, the advantages he enjoyed in being without luggage.

There was a train, and the train started. We crossed the flat fields close to the town, where the battle of Novara was lost and won; went slowly down to Mortara, where we took up a multitude of workmen. We then went on yet more slowly, as if there were misgivings about the soundness of the line; but at each crossing and by-station, the pointsman made us a military salute with his hand to his hat, and presented arms with his walking-stick, which warlike gestures in his own country signify all's well. Between Sartirana and Torreberetti we began to enter the floods. On the right hand of the line, the water was high, up to the necks of the pollard willows; and the railway embankment was alive with little frogs, which pattered into the water, as we moved along, in a veritable shower. The floods had driven them to the embankment, and the train drove them back into the floods; their enemies, the snakes, too, were swarming among them, and took to the water with equal readiness. On our left hand, the flood was not so high, but seemed to be rising, and was running strongly towards us.

When we got out at Torreberetti station, we found that a fresh chasm had just been made in the embankment, about half a mile further on. As we approached it, a woman met us, the very picture of terror, shrieking as she ran, with her black hair streaming behind her. The weight of the water on the right of the line pressing against the inside of a curve, where the embankment was about thirty feet high, had, as it were, forced out the keystone of the arch; and through a chasm, perhaps forty yards wide, the angry, pea-soup coloured flood was rolling down towards the unfortunate village of Torreberetti. The muddy waves at the tail of the mill-race ran at least six feet high, with a roar and vibration that made us wish ourselves on *terra firmior*. To attempt to fill up the chasm was about as hopeful a task as to dam up Niagara. The light soil was crumbling down at a fearful rate, falling in by wagon-loads; the water was tearing the bottom away, and the top going down in great land-slips. The workmen whom we had brought took up the rails at the edge of the chasm, and then looked on helplessly; and so did we. There had been a boat there that morning, but it was gone. Carts would not have helped us, had there been any, and our thoughts reverted to Mercator at his inn.

But it would never do to go back. We fraternised with another Englishman, who had an Italian wife with him. He spoke the language fluently, and was on accession to our forces; but we looked doubtfully on the little wife, who was in a somewhat delicate state. The signora herself had no fears, and encouraged us much by her evident belief that her husband could get through any difficulties. A territorial proprietor of the neighbourhood, who, when at home, lived at a farm somewhere at the bottom of the flood, cheered us also by confidently asserting that the boat must return soon. The train departed with the workmen, and we remained behind, with the flood on our right hand and on our left, and the torrent in front, sitting

on the bank like souls waiting for Charon, and with the painful alternative, that if the boat did not arrive, we should have to walk sixteen miles back along the line to Mortara. The sun shone brightly, and I lit the pipe of patience, and sat the very image of *rusticus expectat dum defuist amnis*. The chasm, in two hours and a half, had already lowered the flood on the right side two feet. Patience was nearly out, and the pipe was out and lit again, when the proprietor of the land covered by water—whom we had familiarly nicknamed Boots, from his wearing his Wellingtons outside his trousers—suddenly began to yell and gesticulate like a maniac at a small object moving among the pollard willows in the distance. It was the boat. We felt all the hopes and fears of shipwrecked mariners when a sail appears on the horizon. They saw us, and came to our assistance; made a cautious detour, to avoid the suction of the breach, and reached the side of the embankment. Boots engaged the boat for us for the sum of twelve francs. Boots sent a minion of his own, who procured for us, I know not whence, two bottles of wine, some bread, sausages, and cheese. The signora feared nothing, took off her bonnet, that the willows might not knock it off as we squeezed between them, sat on a board in the middle of the boat, and dispensed the provisions; found a tumbler in her basket, and served out the wine. Never was such a composed little woman in perils and dangers! The proprietor of the boat came with us, and so did Boots.

A naturalist might have filled his note-book during our little voyage. There were drowned insects to be fished out by scores; but the half-grown locusts were rowing about like small eight-oared galleys, and must have taken a long time to drown, even in the Red Sea. A rat, too, came and appealed to be taken into our ark; but Boots scoffed at him, and he had to return to the top of a pollard willow, and roost there until the waters subsided, and the rice-fields appeared once more. After a voyage of about half a mile, we landed again on the embankment, the courteous Boots accompanying us, and insisting on his man carrying the signora's wraps and my carpet-bag. We crossed the Po by a magnificent bridge of many arches, recently built by Mr Brassey, and therefore proof against all floods, and walked about two miles along the line, until we came to breach number two. This was an enormous gap, as the embankment was higher, and the flood had been rushing through it for two days. The telegraph-wires were broken down, and by good-luck, the superintendent was there with his boat, attempting to repair them, who kindly volunteered to ferry us across with him.

After taking an affecting farewell of the generous Boots, upon whom I with difficulty pressed a few good cigars, we embarked again. This was a more perilous voyage, for the stream was strong, and our punt-poles short, and once we brought-to in the top of a pollard willow at a very critical moment, when our boatmen were nearly exhausted. We landed on the side of a very steep embankment—a trying bit for the poor signora; but at the top there was an engine with its steam up, waiting to take the superintendent of telegraphs and us to Alessandria. We stopped at Valenza, about two miles further on; and there, on the deserted platform, stood a large pile of English luggage—hat-boxes at the bottom—from which my companions helped themselves liberally. We started again upon our heaven-sent engine, which brought us past Val Madonna, within three miles of Alessandria, where the line was sodden and disorganised, and the very spot from which the train had turned back two days before.

The stoker and engine-driver carried our baggage across some fields to the high road, where we waited for half an hour, the centre of a circle of admiring

turkeys and peasants, who wondered where on earth, or water, or under the earth—for our faces were as black as the stoker's—we had come from. At length our good angel, the superintendent of telegraphs, procured us two market-carts, in which we took to the water again, steering cautiously by the telegraph-wires which ran by the roadside. We passed one farmyard where the proprietor was paddling mid-leg deep, towing some of his chattels behind him in a raft formed of two mangers. The road brought us to the line from Turin to Alessandria; a train was stopping at the time, and the poor little signora stepped from her seat in the cart into a first-class carriage, all but exhausted.

#### 'OUR FARM OF FOUR ACRES, AND THE MONEY WE MADE BY IT.'

THIS is a tempting sort of book; tempting in its title, tempting in its opening, and in its slight disclosures of family circumstances; and, above all, tempting in its descriptions of the comforts and luxuries of rural life on a small scale—that is, with its elegances, and without its coarsenesses. On seeing the advertisement, a hundred people in a day, no doubt, think 'I must get a sight of that book.' On getting a sight of it, half the hundred will probably conclude to buy it for the sake of reference; and nearly all the hundred will be conscious of a hankering after a small farm, with its cream and new potatoes, its fine home-cured hams, and pease and asparagus, and young ducks and custards, and wall-fruit without end. Of those who hanker, some may have been previously uncertain about their plan of life; and this book will be pretty sure to send such readers forth in search of a farm of four acres, more or less, in full confidence of making money by it. Now, we have nothing to say against small farming in itself, for those to whom it is suitable. The right sort of family being set down on the land, it may be prosperous and content on fifty acres, on thirty, on ten, and, as John Sillet has shewn, on two. We are ready to go any lengths with successful experimenters in recommending the advantages of open-air occupations, of natural interests, and of doing something indisputably useful every day—to say nothing of the luxuries of the table, and, consequently, increased power of hospitality, which arise from the possession of even a small portion of land. But all advantages have their price; and it is particularly necessary for persons who are not rich enough to take an easy quantity of acres, to make sure that they are not risking too much by following the lead of a sanguine adviser. After a good deal of personal experience of some very small farming under very favourable circumstances, we are disposed to sympathise in the honest enthusiasms of the genial ladies of this four-acre farm, who would like the whole world to be as comfortable as themselves; but we are also thoroughly convinced that if these excellent women go on improving their habits of business, and publish another account of their experience at the end of five years, their second book will be less dangerous than their first.

The experiment was this. Two ladies, and the six children of one of them, had to seek a home, and choose a way of life very suddenly, and without the freedom which a good income affords. They had, we are told, but a small income; and the rent they could afford to give was not to exceed L.70. The account of the house-hunting is entertaining. They followed up the advertisements of houses suitable in price; and, under the guidance of the *Times*, spent many pounds, and travelled over scores of miles of

\* London. 1859.

suburban ground, in search of rural paradises which turned out examples of every sort of disagreeableness. The first ten pages give us excellent sketches of these fruitless journeys; and then the first stage of the business ended thus:

'I fear I should tire the patience of the reader did I detail all our "adventures in search of a house;" but we must entreat indulgence for our last journey. We once more started on the South-western line to see a house, which, from the assurances we had received from the owner, resident in London, must at last be the house, and for which the rent asked was L.70; but once more we were doomed to disappointment by finding that the "handsome dining and drawing rooms" were two small parlours, with doors opening into each other; and that "five excellent bed-chambers" were three small rooms and two wretched attics.

'From the station to this place was four miles; and as, weary and hopeless, we were returning to it, it occurred to H—— to ask the driver if he knew of any houses to let in the vicinity. He considered, and then said he only knew of one, which had been vacant some time; and that parties who had been to see it, would not take it, because it was situated in a bad neighbourhood.

'At the commencement of our search, that would have been quite sufficient to have deterred us from looking at it; but we could not now afford to be fastidious. Our own house was let, and move from it we must, in less than a fortnight; so we desired the driver to take us into this bad neighbourhood, and were rewarded for the additional distance we travelled by finding an old-fashioned, but very convenient house, with plenty of good-sized rooms in excellent repair; a very pretty flower-garden, with green-house; good kitchen-garden of one acre; an orchard of the same extent, well stocked with fine fruit-trees; three acres of good meadow-land; an excellent coach-house and stabling, with houses for cows, pigs, and poultry—all in good order.

'The "bad neighbourhood" was not so very bad. The cottages just outside the gates were small, new buildings, and, once inside, you saw nothing but your own grounds. It possessed the advantage of being less than two miles from a station, and not more than twelve from London.

"This will do," we both exclaimed, "if the rent is not too high."

'We had been asked L.120 for much inferior places, so that it was with great anxiety we directed our civil driver to take us to the party who had the disposal of the house. When there, we met with the welcome intelligence that house, gardens, orchard, meadows, and buildings were all included in a rental of L.70 per annum. We concluded the bargain there and then, and that day fortnight took possession of our "farm of four acres."

It will at once strike the reader that here were five acres, and not four—namely, 'three acres of good meadow-land,' a 'good kitchen-garden of one acre,' and 'an orchard of the same extent.' We presently find that half the kitchen-garden so much more than supplied the vegetables required by the family as to support four pigs, but for which cart-loads of produce would have been thrown away. So here we have half an acre of land, and a considerable quantity of produce for farming purposes, under the name of a kitchen-garden; and we may add to it the whole acre of orchard, for the ground 'was all arable,' we are told, and the crops sown there grew as well as if there had been no trees in the way. Thus, it was a farm of five acres to begin with. Near the end of the book, when we have long been wondering what was done with the cows when the meadows were shut up for hay, it comes out that there was a right of common into the

bargain. We are delighted that there was. We know enough of the anxieties of May and June, when the winter-food is done, and the pasture must be shut up, and yet the beasts must be fed, to be able to congratulate the ladies on being always sure of help at a pinch—on being always secure that, in any case, the cows would not fast. But the establishment could not be said to live on the four acres (or five) while the cows were grazing on the common. There is no saying how many creatures may live on two acres, or one, if there is a common at their elbow to stop all gaps. 'We were enabled,' says our author, 'to mow the whole three acres, as we had "common rights" in our neighbourhood, where the cows could pasture during the spring—an advantage equivalent to full an additional acre, even if the 'rights' were used at no other season.

The settling in the bright home is very pleasantly told: the hopes from the new cow, and the congress of children with their mugs at the first milking, and the scrape 'Madam Sukey' got them and herself into by regularly kicking down pail, man, and stool in spite of two stout neighbours to help, the fine second cow that fell ill directly, and the cure of the morals and physics of each; the complaints from the nursery that the new milk is too good; the picture of the dinner-table, with its profusion of juicy, sweet vegetables, so unlike the flabby greens and withered pence, and tasteless asparagus bought in the towns; the dessert, with its unbruised peaches and apricots, and shining cherries and gooseberries; the vast array of bottled fruit, making it summer at dinner-time all the winter through; and, above all, the ladies' own share in the domestic transactions, and especially in the butter-making. All this is pleasant; and the glow of health and independence all through is really animating. The defect is in the estimates chiefly, though there are some errors of a lighter quality; but the mistakes on economical points are so grave as to call for special mention. It must be remembered that the work is offered as 'a perfect manual for a farm of four acres.'

To take the one department of the dairy. Our ladies tell us that 'an acre of grass is usually considered sufficient to support a cow during the year.' This is assuredly a mistake. If they had said an 'acre of ground,' we should have supposed they meant by means of spade-husbandry. Cobbett used to pretend that a quarter of an acre would suffice, under good tillage; and though this is not otherwise than exceptionally true, it might be fairly said that an acre would much more than feed a cow; but an acre of grass cannot possibly suffice, and, for our part, we never heard of less than two being assigned, and more commonly three. Perhaps 'the common' behind the curtain may eke out the acre. The rent per acre is set down at L.5—rather high, except near London. The only other expenses exhibited are getting in the hay, and oil-cake (18s. per cow) in winter. We hear nothing of the expenses of keeping the pasture; nothing of the necessary manure, the bone-dust or guano, which is indispensable over and above the stall-manure, which also is wanted for the tillage; nothing of the bush-harrowing and rolling of the grass, nor of the weeding and cleaning which every good pasture requires; nor of the care of fences; nor of the cost and repair of implements; nor of the wages of labour, except 15s. for the hay-making. So much for the pasture. When we come to the cows, of which our ladies kept three, with one calf, we find the produce set down—reckoning the milk at 3d. per quart, and butter at 1s. 3d. per pound (a high average), and the quantity at 'thirteen or fourteen quarts per day,' on an average—as worth L.23, 6s. 4d. for the half-year. We see no mention of the original cost of the cows, whereas

the average of their time of service should divide that original cost, and the product should be added to the yearly cost—say, a seventh part of the cost of a cow of five years old, as it may be expected to be serviceable till twelve years old at latest. We find no margin allowed for the loss by exchange of cows—a thing which happens often on every small farm—nor for illness or death; nor for diminution of milk, nor even for the dry season before calving. Any cow which yields thirteen or fourteen quarts daily for the year round, is a marvel; but a group of three which should do so, will not be believed in by practical farmers. Then the hay set down is not enough, if no addition beyond 18s. worth of oil-cake in winter is allowed. Hay, and hay alone, except the little oil-cake, our ladies recommend, while declaring that their mowing yielded less than two tons and a half per acre—that is, less than seven tons and a half for three cows, a calf, and a pony. Now, as each milch-cow should have seventy-five pounds of food per day, this quantity of hay would not feed the three for three months, excluding calf and pony, and allowing for the oil-cake; whereas 'the winter' means, in the computation of cattle-food, four or five months, according to climate.

The oddest piece of information in the whole volume, perhaps, is, that mangold-wurzel makes butter 'strong and bitter.' That saccharine, mild, juicy vegetable giving the butter a strong and bitter taste! We can only suppose that the ladies were badly served; that they gave their lamented guinea for something bad under a good name. We, for our part, are more solicitous about our mangold crop than even the hay, if possible—so welcome and wholesome is it to the cows, and so beneficial to their produce. The crop from our small plot of mangold has this year lasted two hearty cows nearly into the summer, when drought would otherwise have occasioned a serious dilemma; and for the quality of the cream and butter, we might challenge these ladies, or any other dairymen. Instead of apologising to the very pig for giving it mangold, it would be wise to offer it to the cows, to make up for the short commons of hay; and now that 'time is bringing about its revenges,' our ladies may be perceiving that the first six months, or even twelve, can afford no basis for a computation for a course of years. They must soon learn, if they have not learned already, that seven or eight tons of hay will not always feed four or five beasts through the winter; and they may have by this time found the high value of mangold, and the usefulness of even the despised 'brewers' grains,' when the cows are in fine appetite. They do mention carrots as applicable once, when hay was scarce; and even potatoes, adding: 'But these things are only required when you keep more stock than your land [meaning pasture] can support, a fault very common to inexperienced farmers on a small scale'—rather a curious observation from such a quarter.

Coming, now, to the produce, we find the value of the calf, at 'a few days old,' set down, without qualification, at a high figure. 'The price is L.1.' Now, the cow-calf, or 'wey,' may and does fetch from 25s. to 30s. at ten days or a fortnight old; but the bull-calf is not often bid for, or is saleable for something under 5s. No such distinction is made by these ladies, and, as we observed, they pass over the weeks—from five to ten—during which the cow is, or ought to be, dry before calving. They speak of it as a very moderate success to make eight pounds of butter per week from a single cow throughout the year; but they probably know better by this time about that, as well as concerning the average of milk per day.

We perceive some consideration of economy in the mention of glass apparatus for the dairy, which is

spoken of as highly desirable, but expensive. Our experience differs from this, as far as glass milk-pans go. We found them cheaper to set up with than the older apparatus, and not liable to breakage, with ordinary care; but they are objectionable on a ground unsuspected by these ladies: the cream will not rise well in glass-pans. We reverted to the old-fashioned leaded cisterns, which are, in our opinion, incomparable, but by no means repenting our investment in cool-looking, greenish glass-pans; for they make charming drawing-room cisterns for water-lilies. One of these in each sitting-room and in the hall is almost as good as the domestic fountain in eastern houses for refreshment in the summer heats.

One of the most useful and amusing parts of this book is that which details the process of learning butter-making. The ladies could obtain no guidance from books, which are apt to tell everything about butter but the way to make it; and by this account, it is clear that they had not become acquainted with that little volume of Mr Knight's series, *The Guide to Service*, called *The Dairymaid*,\* where the art is fully disclosed. With excellent spirit and sense, the novices set to work, and with admirable patience they conquered their difficulties, coming out, we perceive, first-class dairy-women, sure of their art, because understanding the reasons involved in it. Their only weak point is their rose-coloured spectacles. They tell us that they actually cleared by their dairy in six months L.15, 18s. 4d.; but considering that they have under-estimated expenses, and overlooked drawbacks, and omitted prime cost, and exaggerated both the produce and the market-value of it, we can only send them back to their sum, and hope they will bring it up again when they have learned how to make it correct.

We have not space to shew how the same failing runs through their account of the poultry-yard; but it may be useful to notice two or three points. If their first hen sat on thirteen eggs, and hatched from them thirteen chickens in March, which were fit for the table by the middle of May, and worth six shillings the couple, such a hen and chickens can be no rule for the generality. The ducklings are fairly admitted to be less profitable, though it is recommended that they should be allowed to run in the pasture—a practice notoriously fatal to ducklings. Between eating slugs or other creatures which kill them, and getting entangled in the grass, and cramped or lost, the ducklings which are sent into a meadow may be looked upon as a most precarious property. On the other hand, the ladies are certainly mistaken about the ill-luck of broods hatched in the hot months. On some accounts, and in some climates, the March broods may turn out best; but it is common for a late frost or a heavy rain to be more destructive than any heat, to say nothing of the sharp-set appetites of 'vermin,' hawks, cats, and other enemies of chicks, in early spring. We have seen no finer broods than some of ours hatched in July, and the July of a very hot summer.

In all that they can say of the comfort of bacon and hams derived from well-educated pigs, the ladies have our warm sympathy; but our understanding does not follow them in their process of fattening a pig of thirteen stone for ten shillings. We are not told how old the pig was when bought; but as it cost thirty shillings, it could hardly have been less than four months old. It was killed in three months, when it had had just ten shillings' worth of meal and peas during its latter days of fattening. Now, though we have the same distaste as our author for overfat pork,

\* On turning to this little book, we see that the proper average quantity of butter per cow in a dairy county is set down at six pounds per week in summer, and three pounds in winter. It is a serious thing to tempt a novice with the prospect of eight pounds on the average of the year, and in an apologetic tone!

we never knew a pig, even so young as this, made fit for the butcher under a lower diet than sixteen stone of meal; and this, at one shilling and sixpence a stone, amounts to twenty-four shillings. So much for the pig, which would have answered better, in the neighbourhood of such a garden and household, if bought young at from ten to fifteen shillings, and thoroughly meal-fed for three weeks or a month before sending for the butcher, instead of being played fast and loose with, with 'a little meal and a few pease' within a month of its utilisation. In a yet commoner—the very commonest—article of cookery, bread-making, our ladies may transcend the point of success we are glad to see they have reached. Instead of water, let them use milk, which so abounds in their house; and then their London friends will praise their loaf more than ever.

Finally, let them remember that farm-stock costs money in the first instance, which must enter into any fair estimate of the *pros* and *cons* of farming, large or small; and that there are such things as bad seasons in the land, and diseases and accidents among quadrupeds and fowls; and hawks, and cats, and rats, and frosts, and floods among chicks, ducklings, and pigeons; and that, therefore, a flourishing half-year at the outset is, we repeat, no basis for a calculation on which serious consequences may depend. Not only do we miss all notice of the cost of implements, manure, and special acts of tillage, but even all reference to the wages of labour. It is true, with five acres of ground and a pony-carriage, there must be a man on the premises, farming or no farming; but it will scarcely be pretended that one man can take proper care of four or five beasts in stall and stable, and the carriage, besides the three or four pigs, and a large kitchen-garden and flower-garden, and an orchard which is, in fact, an acre of arable land, and three acres of pasture. Even if the mistresses, maids, and children undertake the dairy and poultry-yard, the pigeons and greenhouse, here is more than any man living can possibly get through. We suspect that a little more experience will shew the necessity of adding above £30 a year, for additional labour, to the list of expenses.

The candid chapter on rabbits shews that our complacent instructress has no desire to deceive. It is the sad old story over again which so many of us could tell: of the pining and mortality among pretty white does and their innocent offspring, till their family grave-yard is full; and the way to have no more children's tears is found to be to have no more rabbits. The pigeons did better; even brilliantly, it appears, though the family abode does not stand in an oasis. These pigeons seem to have bred no quarrels among neighbours. We must quote an anecdote on which we should make the same comment as our author, who never puts pets into pies. The contents of her pigeon-pies 'were taken from the nest as soon as they were fledged.'

'We were one day much amused by a clergyman of our acquaintance who kept a great number of these birds in a room, and who, in default of children to pet, made pets of his pigeons. At dinner, a pigeon-pie made part of the repast. This was placed opposite a visitor, who was requested to carve the dainty. He did so, and sent a portion of it to his host. The reverend gentleman looked at the plateful sent him attentively, and then said, with a sigh: "I will trouble you to exchange this for part of the other bird. This was a peculiar favourite, and I always fed it myself. I put a mark on the breast after it was picked, for I could not bear to eat the little darling!" We always thought that this sentimental divine had better either not have had "the little darling" put into the pie, or have swallowed his feelings and his favourite at the same time.'

Here we must leave the agreeable scene disclosed to us by ladies, whose energy, frankness, and honest enthusiasm we cordially respect, and to whom we wish a long continuance of the health, cheerfulness, and prosperity they so well deserve by their choice of a rational mode of life for themselves and their household. We should be exceedingly happy to know that their example is followed by some of the many women who are sorely in want of something to do; and the more we desire this, the more anxious we are that the sound guidance of the example should not be turned into a snare by defects in the statement of the case. Hence our criticisms, when our mood was altogether one of sympathy and admiration.

### THE INAPPLICATION OF CIRCLES.

As the round globe on which we live may be called a sort of solid circle made up of an infinity of other circles—composed of earth and water—within and upon each other, so the inhabitants of the said globe are similarly constituted of innumerable circles, likewise.

It is the title which society has agreed to bestow upon its own multitudinous phases, and is the very happiest, perhaps, which could possibly have been selected for that purpose. No other term could express, at once, completeness and insularity so well. Squares of society, rhomboids, parallelograms, might indeed suggest the compactness of these sets of the human family with equal accuracy, but could never bestow such an idea of independence. One side at least of such figures could coincide with, could be 'applied to,' as Euclid has it, the side of another figure, and so amalgamate with it, which the things that they were intended to typify never can. Circles, on the other hand, can but touch one another in one point—which itself has no parts or magnitude—and the result even then is only friction and disagreement. When the big wheel of a carriage, for instance, happens to catch the little wheel—which only happens in general overturns and the like—no fusion of any kind takes place, but rather the reverse. Circles can cut one another, it is true, but that does not make the adaptation of their name, to social life, by any means less apposite. At all events, the term is universally acknowledged, and may be taken for granted. As 'the great world' represents in some mouths not the universe or its inhabitants, but a certain small quantity of individuals dwelling in an inextensive district of London, so 'the Circles,' pure and simple, is sometimes put for the *crème de la crème* of the divers cliques of the human family. We once knew a young gentleman refuse to ask for beer at a dinner-party because it was a thing not done 'in the Circles'—a curious method of expressing a no less curious state of artificial restraint.

Every Circle of society is bounded by a line of its own, supposititious like the equator, but not less distinctly defined; and as each of the countless stars of the firmament shares, doubtless, the impression of the author of *The Plurality of Worlds*, that there are no stars—with anything in them—beside itself, so each Circle ignores its fellows, and ludicrously imagines its own particular centre to be the centre of all other systems whatsoever. There is, however, one exception to this rule, the Best Circles, which are bankered after by the denizens of almost every other sphere.

Within their charmed round it is far more dangerous to tread than anywhere else; for not only are

the blest indwellers of that retreat most superciliously scornful—as it is their undoubted privilege to be—of any would-be photographer of its likeness, but every little hanger-on to the extreme edge of its circumference, every grossest atom longing to fly up from its native earth to so elevated a sphere, is prone to take up the cudgels and hector in its defence, as though by such a course it intimated its own connection with it. 'You've never been there yourself,' would be the malicious sarcasm cast upon any man who should attempt to describe the material of the moon, even though he should confine himself to reproducing the established theories of green cheese and moonshine; and the Best Circles are not unlike the moon in some respects. There is a mild, subdued, and almost religious light about them, which is borrowed from the great Sun of Etiquette. They form no catherine wheels of brilliant dissipation, as the Radicals would have us believe, but give forth a fine, steady, rose-coloured light, very overpowering and yet attractive to the British eye. Conversation, in the Best Circles, is carried on in a better fashion than in many more intellectual ones. Nobody has particular 'views' to enforce; nobody can get hold of the universal button-hole of a company, and bore them with an unlimited supply of dreary information. If there is not so much thinking in the Best Circles, as is usual with the majority of the human family, the people who compose them are at least all of the same way of thinking. There is, therefore, no rancorous abuse, no antagonistic obstinacy; no anything, in short, which interferes with the pleasant flow of conversational life. The stream may be sluggish and somewhat shallow, and even not unmingled with a very fair allowance of mud, but there is no bootless conflict with the stones, and no 'lashers' or eddies in which the metaphysical and other savage mental tribes delight to be whirled round and round without an object. Although it is the fashion of most novelists to place the *beau-ideal* of their Gentleman in the Best Circles, he is not often to be found there in the flesh. The Gallant is there, no doubt, but not the Knight. In scarcely any other Circles, indeed, are the chivalrous and self-denying elements less strong, while the enthusiasm is, almost without exception, of the 'early-pea' description, forced, and with very little flavour. Politeness, however, there imitates so many virtues, and fills their places, to all outward appearance, so well—the necessity for the use of the genuine articles being also exceedingly rare—that they are scarcely missed. In particular, from the consciousness that they interfere with the amenities of social life, which are cultivated in the Best Circles to great perfection, Egotism and even Selfishness are compelled to hide their more repulsive features—a victory which is elsewhere often unattainable by the highest convictions.

Our young friend who went without his favourite liquor out of deference to this body, performed a very superfluous act of self-denial. The native inhabitants of the Best Circles are the very last to become victims to mere formulae: they may give out, to the vulgar, a very embarrassing code of regulations, and fence about their own approaches with the most ridiculous impediments, but they themselves are the freest people under the sun.

While, indeed, the full-dressed and uncomfortable snobs are struggling upon their tiptoes to get a glimpse over the enchanted pale, the nobs are lounging within it at their ease, in dressing-gown and slippers. The very few artificial folks one meets among them, careful about their conduct and behaviour, are always those who have no natural business there. Perfect naturalness—so long, that is, as the nature be not distressingly deep or earnest—which, in other societies, is the attribute of Genius alone, is indeed the

peculiar virtue of the Best Circles, and constitutes their chiefest charm. The pains and penalties of the *social tread-mill*, the 'callings,' the 'cuttings,' the 'who-shall-take-whom-down-to-dinners,' are the embarrassments of comparatively low life, the barbarous enactments of persons who connect discomfort with aristocracy.

It is therefore no wonder that most other sections of Society, however exclusive, should make an exception in favour of such a class. Even the so-called Religious Circles smooth their brows and lengthen their lips when Sir Guy Beau Monde is whirling by, although it is well known that Lady Mabel has a separate establishment in Paris, and neither of them, if all tales be true, lead the lives of chastened persons: whereas, if it were Mr Thomas Brown (of the Commercial Circles) who was so often seen with that Mrs Sloper, whose husband has a colonial appointment, these pious folks would shiver, as he passed, from head to foot. Perhaps there is no class so altogether ignorant of the World without as theirs, nor any so indignant that the World in its turn should be unacquainted with them and their concerns.

We were once present in a company of our fellow-countrymen of the North, when the inferiority of the English happened to form the subject of conversation.

'To give you an idea,' said one, 'of the extreme ignorance of even their educated classes, I met an English barrister, last summer, at Oban, who did not know what I meant when I referred to the great Disruption. He positively understood me to be alluding to some volcanic disturbance!'

Only second to this Circle in their complete isolation from the rest of mankind, and in their belief, nevertheless, that they form the focus of attraction for all other classes, are, singularly enough, the Sporting Circles. The mystery of their tones, the solemnity of their manner, and the confidential character of their absurd communications, are beyond measure remarkable; nor do they conceive it possible that their casual companion in a railway carriage, or elsewhere, can be other than well informed of, at all events, all that *Bell's Life* can teach him.

We had once the privilege of sitting next to Miss Cruciform, a Tractarian young lady, at dinner, when Captain Marker St Leger, of the Sporting Circles, was making conversation to her upon the other side. It was when the robbery at Rogers's bank had just been effected, and this was the manner in which Captain St Leger broke ground in performing his colloquial duty to his neighbour:

'What a very sad thing that is about poor Sam Rogers, Miss Cruciform!'

'Yes, indeed; poor Samuel Rogers! Did you know him?' [The young lady was naturally surprised at the gallant captain's apparent intimacy with the Poetical Circles.]

'Know him! Ay, indeed; and I am afraid I shall lose a great deal of money by him too,' replied he.

'I trust not,' said she. 'I understand there is no danger of that.'

'Then you know a great deal more about it than me,' responded he, in a tone of annoyance; 'and yet I had it from Lord George himself.'

'Indeed! I saw it stated in the newspapers that the whole loss, at the worst, would not be more than thirty thousand pounds; and, in short, that it was nothing more than temporary inconvenience.'

'Newspapers! What do they know about it?' cried the excited captain. 'I tell you, Miss Cruciform, between ourselves, that I stand to win five thousand by the mere myself; and if Sam Rogers ain't well enough to ride!'

'To ride, Captain St Leger!' ejaculated the young lady. 'I am speaking of Mr Rogers the poet, whose bank was robbed last week of such a sum of money.'

'Dear me,' laughed the captain; 'and I was speaking of poor Sam Rogers the jockey, who broke his collar-bone on Tuesday, and won't be able to ride the favourite for the Oaks to-morrow.'

### LIFE ALONG SHORE.

THE action of the sea upon various parts of the English coast has long attracted the notice of philosophers, who have hitherto been unable to account satisfactorily for the contrary results produced by the same tides, within a distance of a few miles. On the eastern shore, for instance, the ocean has made frightful inroads for a long series of years: Dunwich was once called 'the splendid city,' and boasted an archiepiscopacy; nothing now remains of its grandeur but the dilapidated walls of one of the religious houses; and this solitary ruin owes its preservation to its cliff-built locality; for the invading waters have long since covered the site of the whole city. At Cromer, a market-town some short distance from Dunwich, the fishermen now cast their anchors amongst the dwellings of their fathers; and the remains of brick walls may distinctly be seen at neap-tides. Between these two instances of the sea's encroachment, many acres of sandy beach, which were formerly deluged by the surf, have been left high and dry by the retreating of the sea.

Along the whole extent of this portion of the coast, navigation is rendered difficult and dangerous by innumerable shoals and sand-banks, the debris of the friable beach, deposited by the opposite action of the tides and currents of the German Ocean and the British Channel. These banks or shoals are positive quicksands, on which a vessel, once grounded, is almost certain to suffer a speedy and a total wreck. The light sandy particles give rapid way to the action of the water; the keel, which at first scarcely grazes the treacherous surface, quickly sinks deeper and deeper, while the hull of the vessel serves as a barrier or dam to the washed-up sands, which clog around the doomed craft, and insure its destruction. The returning tide seldom has power sufficient to float a vessel left for a few hours to the insidious action of a sand-bank off the Norfolk or Suffolk coasts. In calm weather, the action of half-a-dozen tides is sufficient to engulf the hull of a good-sized ship; while the chance of a heavy swell from the North Sea, or the recurrence of one of the gusty squalls peculiar to that coast, dooms the grounded vessel to instant destruction.

These enormous beds of sand, many of which are dry at low-water for an extent of several miles, screen the adjacent shores from the furious beatings of the storm-tossed seas; the securest anchorage is to be found in the roadsteads or channels between the sand-banks and the beach. Yarmouth Roads are supposed to present the safest and most capacious shelter for shipping in the world; but the coast is equally eminent for its dangerous navigation: it is the frequent scene of frightful disaster and the loss of life and property.

A knowledge of the various gates, as the pilots term the deep-water passages running amongst the shifting banks, is only to be obtained by constant observation and practice. Many a tall and goodly ship has been lost by the venturesome daring of the homeward-bound mariner, who, assailed by the tempests of the northern seas, runs for the shelter of the Yarmouth or Lowestoft Roads, and, presuming upon a partial knowledge of the navigation, incurs the danger he is fleeing to avoid. The pilots bred in the neighbourhood are distinguished by their excellence in navigation, and disregard of danger when called on to display their knowledge of the difficulties of the coast. But their skill is unavailing when a

vessel gets fairly aground upon any of the sand-banks, in a heavy sea or gale of wind. The whole of this portion of the coast, from the mouth of the river Orwell to the Wash, is studded with villages and small towns, the inhabitants of which are principally pilots and fishermen, in consequence of the establishment of the coast-blockade having interfered with the more favourite pursuit of smuggling. During the heat of the summer, a few of the provincial gentry flock to various points of the coast for the enjoyment of sea-bathing, but the beach-men count more upon the annual migration of the herrings than the uncertain visitations of fashion. The height of their hopes, however, is a stormy equinox, or a severe and protracted gale, for they consider themselves as visited by the immediate favour of Providence when the neighbouring shore is strewn with wrecks.

A short residence, some years ago, in the borough of Great Yarmouth, afforded me an opportunity of witnessing more than one wreck upon the neighbouring sands, and of gleaming some curious particulars of 'life along shore,' which I here present to my readers, assuring them that nothing is advanced in my relation beyond a mere recital of positive facts.

One Sunday in the month of March, the wind, which had been blowing pretty strongly from the north-west during the day, towards nightfall increased in violence, and roared in fitful gusts, driving a dark rack of clouds across a starlit sky with inconceivable rapidity. At the close of evening-service, as the church-goers were hastening through the streets, the sound of a cannon, fired at short but regular intervals, as a signal of distress, came from seaward, and attracted general attention. In company with three or four of the citizens, I ran towards the Denes, a sandy tract lying between the city and the sea. A few large drops of rain fell from a passing cloud as we hurried on; and the roar of the ground-swell broke upon our ears with unusual force, as soon as we cleared the limits of the town.

A large fire had been lighted on the beach, under the lee of an upturned jolly-boat, as a beacon of hope to the crew of the vessel in distress, and it served us as a guide to the muster-place. In a few minutes, we were standing in the midst of a crowd of pilots, preventive-men, beach-men, and other 'long-shore folk.' The crew of one of the finest yawls on the station were busily employed in hauling their boat through the heavy sand of the beach to the water's-edge. A flash of fire burst from the gloom of the sea; but the report of the gun was lost in the roar of the surf, which broke in tumbling masses on the level shore, and told of the power and violence of the waves.

'What is she, Pete?' inquired an old shipmaster that had accompanied me across the Denes.

'Hard to say,' replied the questioned man, who with a ship's glass had been reconnoitring the vessel in distress.

'Is it the Bremen craft—the bark that was working to the wind'ard this afternoon? She may have put back, fearing a sneezer, and, trying to run into the roads, have struck the tail of the Scrobby.'

'Hard to say,' again responded Pete, who, sitting on the bow of the capsized jolly-boat, kept his glass pointed seaward, waiting for the flash of the next gun.

'There was a Scotch smack coming round the pint at nightfall,' advanced a pilot's apprentice.

'She's square-rigged,' said Pete, poking his glass at the stranded craft.

'I seed two 'mophredite brigs and a taupeul schooner a working up outside, jest as I left my craft at sundown, afore this here squall was brewed,' said the captain of a small coaster lying at anchor off the jetty.

'Mayhap it's a collier in ballast?' suggested the shipmaster.

'Hard to say,' responded Pete.

'It doesn't matter the valley of a stale chaw of backer what she is!' exclaimed a huge ferocious-looking wrecker, advancing towards the fire, and throwing down an armful of fuel collected from the neighbouring huts—'it doesn't matter what she is: in an hour, she'll be busted up, and lie in bits all along the shore. Her timbers can't hold again this heavy sea. She's hard and fast on the Scroby; the tide is now half-ebb. Nothing but a merrykill can save her from going to pieces afore the flood.'

'I know'd Heaven warn't agoing to let us starve!' said an under-sized anatomy of a man, in a large hairy cap, which, coming down over his face, joined an enormously big pair of gray whiskers, and looked very much like an exceedingly bushy head of fox-coloured hair. His small face seemed all eyes and mouth; a short black pipe projected from between his lips, and the reflected light of the burning tobacco illumined his thin and yellow face. He was clad in a pea-jacket of many patches; his nether extremities were cased in a pair of leather breeches, which once formed part of the livery of a fashionable footman, and came to their possessor as part of the proceeds of a forgotten wreck. The garment, originally intended to reach the knees of the wearer, extended half-way down the skewer-like legs of the present owner, who rejoiced in the soubriquet of Skinny Jemmy, and was confessedly the most active wrecker on the coast.

'I know'd Heaven warn't agoing to let us starve, Tom,' said he, kicking an unconsumed piece of drift-wreck into the middle of the fire, which flared up with renewed energy. 'When you was all a-croaking 'cause the fishery failed—and it always will fail while their steam-boats is suffered to frighten the herrings off our coast right on to the Dutchman's shore—and the foul weather kept the visitors from coming to get pickled in the dog-days; and when things was hard, and grub got short, and you fell a-grumbling and blaspheming, all on you, in an ungrateful manner, and talked about seeing your families starve afore your eyes, I put my trust in Providence; and now, who's right? Here's March hardly begun, and here's a blessed good wreck to begin with. The Lord never deserts them what puts their trust in him. I've been a wrecker, now, both man and boy, for better part of fifty year, and am perfectly satisfied of the truth of that 'ere blessed text of Scripture: "The last fish on the griddle brings the first wreck on the beach."'

During the extraordinary recital of Skinny Jemmy's experience, the flash of the gun from the wreck had been twice repeated, and the crew of the yawl stood watching for a lull or pause in the violence of the surf to launch their boat, and proceed to the rescue of the jeopardised seamen. From twelve to fifteen of the finest specimens of humanity stood around and in the boat, awaiting the signal. A cheerful halloo was heard; a young sailor tripped lightly across the beach, and jerked one of the crew from his post, took his place, and excused his rudeness by observing: 'No, no, Jack; brother or no brother, it's my turn now. You've been out in my place three times already, because I've just got spliced. Fair's fair, old fellow; but double duty is too much for any one. I'll go this time, anyhow.'

A deep and heavy wave broke over the bows of the boat, and extended high upon the beach; a short lull followed this extra violence; the word 'go' was uttered; the beach-men strained their toil-strung sinews, and the huge craft floated upon the yeasty waters. Springing rapidly into the boat, each man seized his oar. A few rapid strokes carried them from the beach; and we were absolutely rejoicing

that they were safely through the dangers of the surf, when a huge breaker raised the bows of the yawl into a perpendicular attitude, and the height of the succeeding wave turned the boat completely over lengthwise. Three of the crew were unable to reach the shore, although the distance was but a few yards. Amongst the lost hands was the young man who had insisted upon relieving his brother from an extra spell of duty in his place. His body was found shortly afterwards—frightfully disfigured, by the boat falling on him in its descent—and carried to the residence of his newly made bride.

The rescued portion of the boat's crew congregated around the fire, after having hauled their capsized yawl beyond the reach of the waves. Not a syllable was said, but many an anxious look was silently exchanged in the fitful gleams of the firelight; and as each inquiring gaze rested on the well-known lineaments of a comrade, the hand of gratulation was extended, and the severity of the pressure told of the joy at the salvation of a companion and a friend. The sea, as if satisfied with its prey, seemed suddenly to have ceased its violence; the wind, too, changed its roaring into a steady but comparatively noiseless blow; and the next discharge of the signal-gun from the perilled vessel came with unexpected force upon the ears of the group of beach-men who were surrounding the fire. The sound went to their hearts. Without exchanging a word, the men, who had just escaped a violent death, hastened up on the beach, and congregated round a yawl of still larger dimensions than the former, hauled it down into the surf, and watching the fit opportunity, again quitted the shore upon their dangerous employment, amid the hearty cheers of the bystanders, who gave forth their roarings with an energy that overtopped the violence of the gale. My friend the shipmaster, the laconic Pete, and the young sailor's brother, supplied the places of the drowned men.

'Well,' said Skinny Jemmy, as he rubbed his skeleton paws together in the warmth of the flickering flame, 'habit is stronger than mustard; but if I had seen my brother drowned, though I've never had one, still I couldn't have gone out to be upset in the next boat on such a night as this here, as that 'ere Jack Browne has done, with Dick gone home dead to his three-day-old wife. That's the fourth Browne as I've seen drowned out o' that there family. There was Jem Browne, as was dragged overboard in the herring-net; and Tom Browne, as was squashed between the Dutch brig's side and Gorleston Pier; and Bill Browne, as was knocked overboard on a party of pleasure, by the jibing o' the boom o' the *Lady o' the Lake*; and now here's Dick Browne, spifflicated out o' the *Paul Pry*. Four brothers drowned out of five, ain't so bad, as times go; and if Jack Browne gets any more o' the family luck out o' the *Wheel of Fortune*, as he's now gone out in, there's an end to the Brownes.'

The yawl slowly but steadily moved out to sea. The small lantern, with which the adventurous boatmen had provided themselves, glistened in the stern of the boat, and danced merrily along, sometimes buried in the trough of the sea, and again reared on high, as the boat sunk or rose to the action of the waves. Again the awful sound of the minute-gun came dimly across the sea.

'Ay, ay; boom, boom, boom,' said Skinny Jemmy. 'You'd best save your trouble, and not shake your ship to pieces. She'll part timbers soon enough, I warrant. Wonder what she's laded with?—I say, Daddy Sippins, hadn't you not best look arter the body o' your boy Sam? I seed him jump aboard the *Paul Pry* just afore she got turned over, and I ain't seen him since. Take a stick o' lighted wood, old fellow, and walk down the beach. We picked up Dick

Browne just away off here. Your old woman 'ud like her boy popped into the nirth, instead of leaving him to the cods and lobsters.'

The old man, thus addressed, had just emerged from the surrounding gloom. Believing that Skinny Jemmy was endeavouring to run a joke upon him, he raised his small gray eyes from the attraction of the fire's glare, and puckered his withered lips into a smile. But the seriousness of the surrounding facts told the truth of the wrecker's statement; the old man cast a glance upon his friends, and knew that he was childless. The big tears drove the smile from his face as he mechanically obeyed Jemmy's suggestion, and picked a flaming brand from the fire, to aid his search along the beach. The captain of the coaster swore a commiserating oath, and snatching another lighted stick, joined the father in his quest. The wind soon put out the flames of the torches; but the men continued their wanderings by the water's edge.

An ominous silence hovered over the fire-circling group; a whisper passed round that the bow-light of the yawl was no more visible, and the ferocious-looking wrecker grinned with delight as he noticed the cessation of the sound of the guns.

'There's room for another dozen o' beach-men,' said Skinny Jemmy; 'we've seen the last o' that boatload. I know'd that Browne's family luck would drown the whole biling on 'em.'

'And the barkey's gone to pieces, or she wouldn't have given up squibbling, if it was only to let the shore-boats know where to find her. I say, Skinny, I'll bet you a bottle o' rum that we've more bodies than bales o' goods.'

The wrecker was interrupted in the delivery of his opinion by the sudden appearance of old Sippins, who rushed amongst the group with his long gray hair sporting in the fierce night-winds, and his eyes almost starting from his head. His violent gestures attracted the general attention; he essayed to speak, but an indistinct muttering came forth, which was lost in the roarings of the wind and the sea. He pointed towards the surf, and seemed to implore our interference. We rushed to the spot, and discovered his companion, the master of the coasting-vessel, hallooing and gesticulating to an object scarcely visible in the white sheet of foam. A huge wave dashed a body upon the sandy beach; the succeeding breaker burst over it with tremendous violence, and the force of the ebb whirled it back into the sea. Again, after a few minutes' pause, the dark object was thrown upon the shore—quick as speech could phrase the idea, the beach-men joined their hands, and encouraged by the old man's cheers, they formed a line, headed by Skinny Jemmy, who snatched the body from the water ere the returning wave had power to engulf its pray.

'Dash my old shoes,' said the wrecker, as he cast a half-drowned Newfoundland dog upon the ground, amidst the boisterous laughter of the crowd, 'there ain't no encouragement to do a virtuous action nohow. Specting to save a feller-creter's life, I've been awindled by a jiggered bow-wow!'

'Well, Jemmy, boy,' said the ferocious-looking fellow, 'he is well worth the wetting. If the wind arn't washed out of him, he can fetch you many a good prize from the deep water, where there's no boat within hail. A beast as could swim from the Scroby sitch a night as this, could paddle over to Holland on a calm day with a fair wind.'

The dog, which had been panting upon the sand, now rose and crawled towards the fire. It was observed that a rope, fastened to the animal's neck, trailed along the ground, and tended seaward, hiding its continuance in the watery depths. Jemmy eagerly pulled the line ashore, expecting, doubtless, to find a prize at its extremity, but after hauling several

fathoms of rope from the surf, a jagged end appeared. The dog had doubtless been forced overboard from the stranded ship, with a rope fastened to his neck, in hopes of establishing a communication with the shore; but the violence of the sea had riven the strands; and the poor animal, with exceeding difficulty, succeeded in making the land.

A low rumbling noise upon the sand attracted our attention; a horse and cart, containing Captain Manby's apparatus for the relief of wrecked vessels, arrived upon the beach; but the distance of the wreck from the shore prevented the operation of the gallant captain's scheme—the efficacy of which, in fitting positions, has been found to be complete. A coil of thin rope is spread upon the beach, attached to a hawser of considerable length and strength; the other end of the rope is fastened to a cannon-ball, which is fired from a mortar with sufficient force and elevation to pass over the ship in distress. The hands aboard are then enabled to haul in the hawser, and form a medium of intercourse with the land. Many a good ship has been saved from destruction, and many a valuable life has been preserved by this simple remedy.

A shout arose from the watchers at the extreme edge of the tumbling surf; a boat dashed past, beyond the influence of the breakers, its white sides glistening in the firelight, and a faint cheer from its crew was borne on the wings of the blast. Captain Manby, who had accompanied his apparatus to the beach, told us that the craft was his life-boat, which had been lying in the harbour's mouth for the purpose of being repaired. Upon hearing the first signal of distress, he had issued orders to his crew; and the noble-hearted old fellow lifted his beaver, and cheered them as they passed on their dangerous errand of humanity.

The violence of the gale and the roaring of the sea had now sensibly abated. Several women, the wives and relatives of the wreckers, joined the group by the fire, and spoke in merry tones of the expected profits of the wreck.

The dog next attracted the attention of the beach-men. He rose from his couchant attitude by the fire, and bending his gaze towards the sea, uttered a low and melancholy whine, which gradually increased in force till it became a confirmed howl of the most dismal tone. Cajoleries, threats, and blows were vainly tried to stop his hideous noise: suddenly bounding from his resting-place, he made towards the boiling surf, and dashing rapidly into the waves, was seen struggling with a human form. A lull of longer duration than usual enabled him to drag his burden within our reach, but he refused to quit his hold till the body was deposited upon the sand by the fireside.

The rescued form was that of a young man of elegant exterior; flowing curls of raven black hair, a small moustache, and the deep olive complexion, told of his foreign birth. The dog licked his hands and face with eager fondness, the women chafed his palms, and Jemmy poured moonshine spirit down his throat; but the destroyer had fastened his grasp around his victim—the eyes rolled, and the breast heaved—the death-rattle sounded in the throat, like the gurgling cry of a drowning man, and the dropping of the jaw, and the glazing of the eye, too surely told that the spirit had departed.

The women, convinced of the futility of their exertions, quitted the senseless corpse; but the dog, unconscious of his loss, nestled closer to the form of his master, and watched the actions of the wreckers with a keen and suspicious eye. A gold chain crossed the breast of the drowned man; a breast-pin glistened in the firelight, and rings of value ornamented the fingers of either hand. Such prizes were not likely to

be unnoticed by Skinny Jemmy. With much cunning, therefore, he endeavoured to conciliate the dog, and watching his opportunity, he lifted up the head of the recumbent corpse, and endeavoured to draw off the golden chain. But his greediness cost him dearly; the faithful dog flew at him with a savage fury which it was impossible to resist. The wrecker was tumbled over in the sand, and forced amongst the burning embers of the decaying fire. The bystanders laughed at the distress of their brother-wrecker, but moved not a hand or foot to his rescue. I seized the dog by the throat, and tore him from his grasp. The almost suffocated Jemmy sneaked into the gloom of the surrounding darkness, and the dog returned to his useless watch by the side of his master's corpse.

An officer in the service of the coast-guard, for the prevention of smuggling, now passed our fire, and told us that the yawl had made the beach about a mile below the jetty; that the crew had informed him of the vessel's separation before they could reach her, and of the total loss of her crew.

'And in good time, too, lads,' said the big wrecker: 'the flood is now making, and everything that is not swallowed by the sand, must be ashore afore daylight. If the ebb had lasted an hour longer, not a stick nor a rag would have been left upon our coast.'

'Wonder what she's laded with,' again muttered Skinny Jemmy, as he raked together the smouldering remnants of the fire. 'She must be a foreigner, by the look of that 'ere feller what's been washed ashore. Dash his dog, say I. Not but what Scotch smacks is good things, if there's plenty of passengers, and the luggage is not stowed away in the hold. But them colliers I 'bominates. Coals is not eatables, nor valuables, and it takes a long time to get a sackful by picking 'em up piecemeal amongst the sand. Trunks and boxes is convenient, but carpet-bags is a bad invention. Big Bob, do you remember them 'ere round-topped leather boxes what was washed ashore from the Russian? Didn't they roll along the shore nicely? There ought to be an obligation on all travellers to have such things: it saves trouble so.'

'Get up,' said Big Bob, as Jemmy termed the ferocious-looking wrecker—'get up,' said he, kicking a weather-beaten old woman from her seat by the fire. 'Light your lantern, Moll, and let us mizzle down the beach—everybody else has gone up; and the wrecker and his companion, journeying the opposite way to Skinny Jemmy, quitted the neighbourhood of the fire.

Scarcely had the suspicion of the destruction of the vessel been confirmed by the preventive officer, ere the main body of the wreckers dispersed themselves along the shore, in eager anticipation of gleaming a harvest from the matters of wreck cast up by the roaring seas. A long line of glittering lights gemmed the shore on either hand far as the eye could reach. The glad shouts of the successful groups, and the imprecations of the disappointed, coming freely on the ear, and mingling strangely with the moanings of the dying storm.

The old beach-man whose son had been lost in the upsetting of the yawl, remained by the fireside, sobbing piteously, and gazing with sympathetic eye upon the body of the master of the dog, which began to exhibit some tokens of appreciating his loss, by whining over the motionless carcass at his side. A loud exulting shout from Skinny Jemmy told of his success. The old man raised his head, and dried his unavailing tears. The shout was repeated; old habits proved unconquerable, and he hastened to join his mates. As I walked home, I heard the old man's voice in high dispute, mixed with frequent oaths and violent oburgations; he was daring another wrecker to the fight for disputing his right to the watch of a drowned sailor whom he had hauled from the sea.

At the suggestion of Captain Manby, we placed the dead body of the dog's master in the cart which brought the apparatus to the shore, and prepared for our return to Yarmouth. The dog did not interfere with our intention; but when the corpse was safely deposited, he jumped into the cart, and crouched down by the cold remains of his only friend.

As we walked slowly homeward, along the sandy paths of the Denes, I could not help ruminating upon the many dangers of all 'who go down to the sea in ships.' 'It were surely better,' thought I, 'to gain a hard and precarious living by gleaming the refuse corn upon another's land, than strive for the golden but dangerous harvest to be gathered by ploughing the surface of the treacherous main.'

#### FREAKS IN PLANTS.

Who can forget the grand amusement of his boyhood, when first intrusted with the perilous pocket-knife, and allowed to wander on the heath, cutting fern-stalks, and lost in amazement at the King Charles in the Oak, or the Flying Eagle, disclosed by the operation? When the rage was for collecting these things, the sections of trees were often found to present very curious appearances; so curious, indeed, that we find St Pierre—the St Pierre of *Paul and Virginia*—in his *Harmonies of Nature*, deeming it 'not impossible that we might find in flowers that correct model of the sun's shape which we have hitherto sought in vain from our telescopes. (1) Why should it be absurd,' he asks, 'to trace in these the lineaments of that luminary, when we find in flowers so many representations of the figures of insects, birds, and of the heads of men and animals?' After this, we may well congratulate ourselves, for the truth's sake, that botany and astronomy are not correlative sciences. Still, as appears from some engravings now before us, the old naturalists must have found in the vegetable world coincidences of form to their hearts' content. Upon several sections of the apple-tree there is a capital Virgin and Child, a mitred ecclesiastic, and some musical instruments. Some fossil ferns, when cut across, present the curious appearance of a number of capital W's arranged round the circumference. The *sigillaria*, also fossil plants, have their names from being covered with a vast number of impressions like those of a signet. But we hasten to speak of our favourite orchids. The mimicries performed in some of these exquisite flowers are such as almost to exceed belief. In the magnificent conservatories of the Messrs Loddige at Hackney are collected many thousands of these rare exotics. In one wonderful flower, the Chancellor and his Wig are figured forth with surprising exactness. Further on, a sort of flying goblin, with a number of legs and arms, and a fearfully blotched countenance, dangles down in all its terrors before our eyes. We are next startled by a *catasatum*, looking like some of the horrid anomalous monsters, which are all very well in oil or engraving, but are clearly contrary to all rules of natural history. Here expands a Venus's slipper, as if Cinderella had been to a ball among the flowers, and dropped her wonderful shoe upon its branches; only no prince picks up and makes a stir about the lost article, the vegetable shoe. There is the swan orchid—the *cycnochus*—a wonderful plant, in which it needs no painter's imagination to detect, at a glance, the most curious resemblance to the proud bird whose name has been applied to it—its well-formed body and wings, its delicate, long, twice-recurred neck, rather swollen at its extremity for the head, all of a spotless white. Beyond, a livid old gentleman's half-countenance confronts us; and, pulling down the lower jaw, we behold a mouth without a tongue, and an

attempt at a throat behind. Of all the monstrous creations in this flower-world, this is the greatest and most perplexing.

The excitable imagination of Dr Darwin ran wild upon these coincidences, and he paints in colours of a brightness peculiarly his own, the appearance of the American spider orchid. Truly, it is a remarkable flower—a great brown spider mimicked to the life, squatting at the entrance of its vegetable den, and scaring away all intruders by its menacing aspect. Then there is a multitude of resemblances to other objects, not less striking, but more common. Our British orchids, the bee and fly orchids, are familiar instances. 'In the genera *Oberonia* and *Drymodia*,' says Dr Lindley, 'Pythagoras would have found a living evidence of animals transmuted into plants.' One of the flowers belonging to the former species is called *Anthropophora*, the man-orchid. If there are fairies in the floral world, here is Oberon himself. Lizards, toads, and insects appear to have sat to the painter and modeller in the formation of many other orchids; and ladies will be astonished to learn that one impertinent flower is a complete pair of stays in miniature. Another, called after its original, displays the most unmistakable similarity to a human thorax, even in minute particulars. A small chaste-looking flower at Loddige's, has the face of a little fairy. It seems a thousand pities Ovid was no botanist: could he have fallen in with half a dozen such instances as we have recorded, what a heap of elegant fabrication would have been added to his *Metamorphoses*!

Not to prolong our extracts from one tribe alone, let us turn to others. The mandrake, when stripped of its leaves, has occasionally a rude resemblance to the human form. The description of Langhorne will convey the most lively idea of its appearance:

Mark how that rooted mandrake wears  
His human feet, his human hands;  
Oft as his shapely form he rears,  
Aghast the frightened ploughman stands.

The old man cactus (*Cactus senilis*) is about as odd a plant as any in our list. Reaching a height of eight or ten feet, he is often seen in his native place, his long white hair flowing to his feet, spending a peaceful existence, and attaining a green old age in spite of the early streaks of gray which appear on his head. It was long a fable that the Tatarian forests abounded in vegetable lambs. They were tolerably well formed, had four, or nine legs, a head, and a tail, and were clothed in golden wool. If there was any truth in the account at all, it was due to the alleged occasional resemblance of a hairy fern to such creatures. The name of the fern was the *Polypodium barometz*, or *baranetz*—such, at least, is Sir Hans Sloane's account. An equally curious resemblance, about which there is no mistake, is the Chinese finger-fruit, the *Citrus sacodyctylus*, 'the hand of Fo.' There were some good casts of this curiosity some years ago at the Chinese Collection in Hyde Park: the fat and shapely contour, the delicate fingers and thumb being very strikingly exhibited. The Chinese have a fruit, also, which they call the *lung yen*, or dragon's eye, and which bears a very curious resemblance to an eye-ball 'gouged' out of its socket. The root of the bamboo is particularly prolific in wooden monstrosities, which resemble some things in nature, and suggest others which the world never saw. Taking advantage of this disposition, our skillful friends of the Flowery Land, who are passionately fond of these curiosities, soon make, with the aid of a few carving tools, the root assume a respectable figure, and we are presented with a grim-looking old gentleman, wearing a frizzly beard of root-fibres, dressed in apparel of the same, and looking at one

with that excessively terrible jocosity of countenance which was once, and may be still, for what we know, so much in vogue. Sometimes the old gentleman has a wife and one or two children, united together in bonds somewhat more material than those of family love. 'Dragons and gorgons, and chimeras dire,' form the appropriate pediment to these sculptures. The *Broussonetia papyrifera* of Japan and India, from which India-paper is manufactured, has leaves which contain a yet more strange mimicry. Each of them appears as if one had rent a piece out of it, and as if it had been afterwards darned up again. That blushing production the love-apple, the tomato of epicures, sometimes commits some imitative freaks; occasionally it breaks out into roseate fingers, and now and then it has the form of a pair of chubby hands folded together.

Our green-houses and flower-gardens will supply us with a multitude of mimicries, in which the resemblance has been the origin of the title. That of the common cock's-comb, the long enduring ornament of our stified city-windows, is a very homely example to adduce, but as striking as many more rare. The calceolarias are flower-slippers; the sweet-pea, a butterfly; the campanulas, bells; the asters, stars; while the heart's-case, the columbine, the Turk's-cap, and a host of others, overpower our pen, and bid us leave the list to every one to complete; and that will prove a longer task than may have been supposed.

## KATIE CHALLONER.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

### CHAPTER I.

KATIE Challoner was a very young creature when I was first introduced to her, a little toddling thing of not quite a twelvemonth old. Her one great ambition seemed to be to get into her father's arms, and after nestling there a moment or two, to struggle down on to her feet, and with one of his fingers in each of her fat, dumpy hands, to go roaming about the room, uttering little inarticulate cries of pleasure. And he—the reserved, silent, constrained, unimpressible man, as he was held—was as devoted to his little daughter as she to him; and, hard wrought as he often was with his Sunday duties, or his pastoral peregrinations, in a parish that seemed to be trying into how many far-off corners it could contrive to squeeze itself, he would still forget his weary back and stiff limbs, to stoop over her as she tottered about, and drink in, with suffused eye, the little looks of love she would cast up at him, as she felt his gentle hand.

George Challoner and I had been neighbours for some time, and friends much longer. Very shortly after his marriage, he had been presented to the vicarage of Moreton, and almost from the day of his coming into residence, our old habits of intimacy had been resumed. Four children were born to him in the first six years of his married life, but two only had survived the first few weeks of life, and one of those two was very delicate. Three years later, little Katie was born.

I was compelled to be absent from my home at this period, and for many months subsequently; but in his letters, my friend told me how he was affected by this new addition made to his family. 'I did not know,' he said, 'that I could love an infant as I love this little girl.'

The elder of his two surviving boys was in many

respects a remarkably fine lad; but the promise of strength indicated in his infancy and early childhood was not realised as he became older; and before Katie grew to be ten years old, she and her brother Jamie alone were left to their parents.

Jamie, though delicate, and almost weakly, from the first, had yet passed through all the perils which beset the earlier stages of child-life, and was now a remarkably thoughtful and studious boy; so much so, indeed, that his parents looked on with somewhat painful admiration at the efforts of his vivid intellect; at times, perhaps, in still more painful anticipation that the frail body might prove to be unequally yoked with such a striving mind. Katie, at ten years old, was a well-grown girl of her age; tall, fair-haired, blue-eyed, loving, and engaging. Her attachment to her father, and his to her, had sustained no alteration as she grew older and taller, save that of corresponding growth. She clung to him until she was able to walk, and then would never have left him with her own consent; her hand stole up to his, whether indoors or abroad; his name was the first word she learned to pronounce; she started when she heard his step or the tones of his voice, and, without a moment's pause, left every one and everything, even her food, to go to him. She was his constant companion in his spare half-hours; walked with him, or rode upon his shoulder as he went about the roads or footpaths nearer home; sat on her little stool at his feet in his study, quiet and content, as if it was happiness only to be near him; began early to be his ministering spirit in all home-wants and habits; and in two words, was as necessary to him as he was to her. To her mother, too, she was not only, to her little utmost, always and diligently helpful, but loving and affectionate in no ordinary degree.

Two or three short years passed away, and Katie was the only child left to Mr and Mrs Challoner. After almost startling those who knew him well enough to judge of his intellectual powers, by the brilliancy of his attainments, Jamie died; and his light, like that of the sudden meteor which flashes across the placid sky and is lost in a moment's space, was no more seen.

His father and mother had foreseen his fate for months, nay, for years; but still their sorrow was none the less real and penetrating. Katie now never left her father when it was possible for her to be with him, nor would he have willingly borne her absence. She seemed instinctively to know his thoughts, and feelings, and wishes as they rose; and often, as the silent, self-contained man struggled with his grief, she would rise softly and stand by him, clasping his arm close to her side with her own, nestling her face to his shoulder, and putting her spare hand into his, as she had used to do in the simple love of her infancy. She spoke no word; but he understood the appeal, and accepted the comfort; and they two grew together more every day.

Another claim was now to be made upon her ministering offices. Her mother, never very strong, had felt her son's loss acutely; and this, together with the constraint she had imposed upon herself, that she might not add to her husband's sorrow by suffering her own to appear too vividly, had taxed her strength beyond its powers. When the excitement, which had given her unnatural strength as long as Mr Challoner's grief was still fresh and strong, began to be withdrawn by the gradual recovery of his wonted self-command, she began to fail from day to day. The thought of bodily motion became oppressive, and her one desire was to be kept quiet, to be at rest. It was the same with her mind also. She could neither read nor think. True, she suffered no pain; but neither did she enjoy any

pleasure, save only that which originated in the simple presence of her husband and her daughter.

Katie now was altogether invaluable. I believe her remarkable instinctive perceptions of what would most conduce to the comfort of the poor invalid, were the means not only of making her mother's mournful condition as little distressing as it could be, but, under God, of rendering the continuance of life possible.

A slow, weary, anxious winter and spring were passed, with no decisive improvement. It was something that there was no decided change for the worse. The sea-side was recommended, and it was decided to take the sufferer to her native place, Cliffborough, for some months. The result surpassed all expectation, and even hope; but a lengthened and severe winter again undermined her only partially recovered strength, and before its snows were past, it became evident that those of another winter would mantle her grave.

She died, and Katie now was become her father's earthly all in all. I fear I cannot well describe what she was at this time. Still a mere girl in age and in form, she was a woman in expression, in thought, in feeling. All her friends, when with her, felt as if years of life-experiences had been concentrated in the sorrows she had known, and the duties they had entailed on her. To and with her father alone was she still a girl. With him she seemed the same loving, clinging, depending, artless being she had been when a very little child. Always loving and kind; with a nature that knew none of the harsher emotions; prone to ready pity; restless until distress or suffering, wherever she heard of it, had been succoured or alleviated; and early made aware, as if by instinct, that she had a strong power of consolation bestowed upon her, she had grown by the time she was seventeen to be not simply unselfish—that is saying too little—but almost incapable of originating a thought in which her own gratification was the leading idea. Her one great object in existence was her father; and yet, inconsistent as it may seem, the exclusiveness of this object had no effect in rendering her less thoughtful or careful for others than she had always been. Her sweet, gentle, obliging ways made her very dear to all her girlish companions; while among the children of the neighbourhood she was absolutely idolised. If there was a sorrow or a difficulty among them, Katie Challoner was the universal comforter and succourer. If there was something to be done which only a clever hand and a kind heart could accomplish, it was Katie Challoner's hand and heart that were instantly appealed to. A children's party without Katie was no party, and a Christmas-tree that she had no hand in, by that one deficiency lost half its attractions. No one was jealous of her, or feared her, or doubted her; no one did anything but love her; and she deserved all she got, and more.

So passed three years, with much change to her in one way, but very little in any other. She grew into a woman, and a very lovely woman. You almost wondered to see her so lovely, after looking at her a while. Her features were not very regular, nor, quite all of them, very good; but her hair was beautiful, her eyes very beautiful, her mouth beautiful, her complexion perfect, and the expression—it was in that her chief charm lay—the expression of a guileless, noble, earnest, loving nature, looking out of the whole countenance, and finding unsought confirmation in every word and gesture.

Her grief at her mother's death had been, though heartfelt and sincere, much mitigated by a perception of the duties towards her father. She was too much preoccupied with the instinctive effort to be a comfort to him, and the more so now she was his only one on earth. But in the very

degree in which this was so, would her grief and distress at her father's death be aggravated and enhanced. And so it was; he was taken ill, and in four days lay dead. The last day which saw him alive, saw him conscious; and as Katie's hand lay in its old-acustomed place in his, now too weak to press it, he told her, in faint and faltering words, what she had been to him, how she had alleviated his sorrow, and been his comfort and his joy; and then he spoke of their glad reunion with all their dear ones, with no fear of parting more to embitter its gladness. A few minutes more, and she felt his hand close on hers, as it had never done before since his illness came on. But the grasp relaxed—grew fainter—ceased. Her father was dead, and she insensible. Her youth and strength seemed to wither away, under her bereavement, like grass before the pursuing flame. She was on the verge of the grave for nearly three weeks, and then rallied very slowly and flickeringly. At length life and youth asserted their right to prevail, and she was again well enough to be moved. It was decided that she should embrace the offer made by her maternal aunt, Miss Woodville, of a home with her at Cliffborough. This lady was a confirmed invalid, and quite unable to leave the house. But she was most excellent and amiable, and all Katie's sincerest well-wishers agreed in thinking no other plan half so good could have been devised for her. And so, a short time after, she removed to Cliffborough, and took up her abode with Miss Woodville.

The physical effect of change of air and change of scene was almost marvellous. After a few days only, her limbs recovered their roundness, her step its lightness, and her eye something of its former brightness. But a heavy gloom still hung over her at times, which no efforts of her own, no sympathy or kindness of her aunt's, could dispel or materially lessen. The one object of her life had been snatched from her pursuit, and the world and all in it, even life itself, were, as yet, one cheerless blank to her.

In a short time this depressing gloom began to give way before a silent and unobtrusive influence. She had long known her aunt as a hopeless invalid; but she had not known that she was liable to a perpetual recurrence of fits of terrible pain, followed by some hours of distressing languor, and that scarcely a week passed without at least one of these seizures. She arrived at this knowledge accidentally. She had gone into her aunt's room, one day, about six or seven weeks after her arrival, to ask for some instructions as to some work she had undertaken, and, just as she entered, Miss Woodville was in a paroxysm of fearful pain. Katie was terribly alarmed; she thought her aunt was dying; and it was only after repeated assurances that it was nothing unusual, and was passing off, that she was reassured. Then the thought entered her mind that she had for weeks been receiving all that the kindest, most thoughtful care and sympathy could dictate, at the hands of one who sorely needed such offices to be rendered to herself—whose need at times, indeed, was excessive. She felt rebuked by her aunt's patient and silent fortitude under the weight of such a cross, and ashamed at thinking that she had been the recipient, instead of rendering the services of sympathy and affection. Then she thought, may I not be a help, a comfort, and a support to another dear one? and thus she found what she herself needed, in the efforts this resolution incited her to make. She had again found an object, and it was health and peace to her mind and heart. She became more lovely than ever, and the permanent impress left upon her features by her terrible conflict with grief, only served to refine and elevate the character of her loveliness.

Miss Woodville was unable, as I have intimated, to

go out into the world of Cliffborough society; but still she was known and appreciated by many, and on days when she was well enough to receive visitors, her drawing-room, from one o'clock until three, was rarely without visitors; in this way Katie formed acquaintances, and soon began to be held in the same estimation at Cliffborough that she had enjoyed in Moreton. Among the most regular of Miss Woodville's visitors was a Mr Fountayne, a wealthy merchant and influential townsman of Cliffborough. Report said that, twenty years before, he had been her affianced lover; that her ill health had commenced about that time; and that, on her being assured, after months of illness, by her medical attendants, that there was no earthly prospect of restoration to health, although her life might be continued for many years, she had refused to clog him with such a burden. It was long before he could be induced by her to take the same view of the case; but at length he did, and for a period of several years was absent from Cliffborough, engaged, as it was understood, in the personal supervision of some branch of the foreign business of the firm he was connected with, and which, it was believed, was greatly benefited by his presence and activity. He had then returned to England, and resumed his former functions and abode; and his intimacy with Miss Woodville had been revived, and ever since continued to be marked by the most entire confidence in, and affectionate regard for each other.

Katie had often heard of Mr Fountayne before she came to live in Cliffborough, and had seen him on more than one occasion; her recollections represented him as a rather elderly-looking gentleman, very kind-hearted, but with a little abruptness or brusquerie of manners, which rather startled her sometimes. But the kind-heartedness had impressed her much more deeply and abidingly than the roughness; for she had seen the former in perpetual flow towards one of the most frequent companions—playfellows they could hardly be called—of her brother Jamie. This was Frank Fountayne, a nephew of the gentleman we are speaking of, almost as delicate a lad as poor Jamie; and though not, like him, devoted to study, yet very fond of quiet sedentary pursuits, very ingenious in the construction of toys and quaint knick-knacks, and with a singular facility for clever wood-carving with his knife. The two little weakly-looking boys were great friends, and much together; and thus Katie had not only learned to look upon the nephew as a second delicate brother—while he certainly loved her as much as if she had been his sister—but had also learned to love the uncle, whose occasional visits to Frank's widowed mother were always marked by peculiar kindness. Only a few weeks before Jamie sickened with his fatal illness, Frank's mother had died, and he had been removed from Moreton by his uncle, having taken most loving leave of poor Jamie and 'his own darling little sister,' as he called Katie.

During her mother's prolonged sojourn at Cliffborough, Katie had seen Frank more than once. The delicate sapling of a boy had grown into a tall and by no means robust youth, much too shy to attempt more than a short and somewhat faltering reference to former days. He was at this time in the office of a branch of his uncle's firm, established in the county town, and was declared to be doing exceedingly well there.

It may have been some four or five months after Katie's domestication at her aunt's, that Mr Fountayne called one morning, but not, as usually, alone. Katie, at first, did not in the least recognise the tall, handsome, well-made, whiskered young man who accompanied him; and truth to tell, although he knew very well who the young lady he saw in that drawing-room must certainly be, he was by no means prepared to recognise in the lovely girl before him her whom,

eight or ten years ago, he had called 'his own darling little sister.'

Leaving the young people to renew their acquaintance as they best might, Mr Fountayne proceeded to tell his old friend that the firm had sanctioned the plans, which he had already more than once mentioned to her as originating with himself, for Frank's advancement; and that, in consequence, his nephew—a little turned of twenty-one—was installed in a somewhat confidential and important position in the office at Cliffborough: while—Mr Fountayne went on to add—if he continued to conduct himself as well for the next few years as he had done for the last four or five, his fortune might fairly be looked upon as made. Miss Woodville congratulated the young man, who was by no means a stranger in her house, very warmly; and as her visitors rose to go, said to him: 'Frank, you must come and spend an evening with your old friends sometimes. You will always be welcome.'

And so Frank became a regular visitor at Miss Woodville's; and his presence at her tea-table seemed to be equally acceptable to all the parties concerned. His intercourse with Katie, after the constraint of their first meeting wore off, seemed to become as kindly, and almost as familiar, as when they used to call one another brother and sister: there was that peculiar character about it which nothing seems to give but old and friendly acquaintanceship. They might have been brother and sister, for aught a stranger could see. They seemed to have no reserve towards each other, and quite as little—at least as regarded their mutual friendship and acquaintance—towards any third person.

Somewhere about this time, a picnic—and the Cliffborough world was famous for its picnics—was organised to take place in some glorious woods at about three miles' distance from the town. Every body raved about the picturesque beauty of the Red Brow Woods; and Katie, who had never yet found heart to mingle in the general society of the place, allowed herself to be induced to join the party. Frank, who was an eligible for every party, of course made one also. Horses, ponies, and even donkeys, were in requisition to convey the numerous party to their destination; and Katie, who had often ridden when living at Moreton, found herself again in the saddle, and mounted on a pony which was not quite so quiet as some of the others. In ascending a rather steep and somewhat narrow path, which led to the small embowered platform where the provisions were to be set out, her pony took offence at a patient donkey which was jogging along very leisurely just in front, and began curvetting on two legs, and otherwise conducting itself in a disagreeably eccentric way. Katie was a good horsewoman, and rode without fear, and she sought gently to soothe her palfrey, and induce him to proceed more soberly and quietly. However, a more irregular caper than any that had preceded it, brought the animal into such a position on the very verge of a precipitous bank, some twelve or fifteen feet high, that one foot now suspended in the air would, when brought down, find no resting-place, and then a fearful fall for both rider and steed must ensue. Frank, who, on observing the pony's restiveness, had hurried up from a party of ladies he had been walking with, a little in the rear, fortunately not only saw the danger, and the only means by which it might be anticipated, but was near enough to act with the decision that alone could have availed. Rushing impetuously forward, he clasped her firmly with his right arm, at the very instant the pony lost its footing, and tottered over—catching a sapling-tree with his other arm as he did so—and fairly held her suspended for a moment, as the animal fell from under her. He was

unable, however, to prevent himself from being borne down and over the edge of the bank by her weight; and it was not without difficulty, and the exertion of great strength, that he succeeded in arresting their downward tendency, obtaining foothold, and eventually raising her quite unhurt, though a little shaken. As he did so, his countenance, deadly pale, the expression of his eye, and his low, faltering, intensely earnest, 'Thank God, Katie, you are saved!' disclosed a secret which even she hitherto had scarcely ventured to suspect; and he saw that it had done so.

There was no great harm done, and the picnic passed off much as all such parties, in fine weather, usually do.

As the party dispersed after luncheon, Katie found herself near enough to Frank to utter a few hurried words of acknowledgment, which she remembered, with some degree of self-accusation, she had not so much as attempted to do before, and added an anxious inquiry if he really was not at all hurt. After this, until their return to Cliffborough, rather late in the evening, they scarcely met again, and when they did, it was but to wish each other good-night.

On the following day, Frank looked in for five minutes at Miss Woodville's to inquire after Katie, and to ask if he might come in, in the evening. He did so, and took the opportunity of Miss Woodville's being summoned away for a few minutes, to come to the point at once, though not with a very steady voice.

'Oh, Katie!' he said, 'I cannot tell you what I felt yesterday when I saw you in such danger. It made me forget in a moment all my long-fixed purposes. I hardly know what I said, but I am sure I ought—I mean to say I can't help saying a little more, if you will let me.' And then he went on more connectedly, and told her that he believed he had always loved her. He had never forgotten her all the years they had been separate; and when he had seen her those two or three times a few years since, he found he had the same tender affection for her as when he used to call her his darling little sister, and which he had never felt for any one else; and now, from the time he had come to live at Cliffborough, he had known that he loved her as he could love no other; but he had not dared to say so, hardly even to himself. She was rich as compared to him; he had nothing but his salary, and his hopes, and his steadfast purpose to do his duty and make his way, if he could. But if he should prosper, as his uncle augured that he would, then, after a few years, he had hoped he might have come to her and told her all he felt for her, all he dared to aspire to. 'Oh, Katie!' he said, coming closer to her as she stood by the fireplace, and taking her hand, which she did not make any haste to withdraw, 'with that hope to encourage me, I should find courage, and determination, and endurance for anything. But I must not ask you to let me entertain it without first telling you something else, very painful to me. My uncle holds me in some suspicion at the present time, and I have nothing but my own word to clear me. Mr Turner has told him that he saw me, late one night about a week ago, going into a house which has a very bad reputation, as being the scene of much low gambling and other evil things. That very night, I had been at my Cousin Stonor's lodgings until a late hour, and when my uncle asked Stonor about it, he replied that I had gone to sleep at his rooms, that he had left me in that condition about half-past nine, and when he returned, about eleven, had found me awake, but very excited. Mr Turner, I ought to have said, had not seen the face of the person he had noticed, but said he had no sort of doubt at the time that it was I.'

'But it was not you, Frank?' interposed Katie.

'O no—indeed, it was not. But my uncle, who is

so immovable in his opinions and belief, when once formed, will only say he hopes it was not. I was very strangely affected that night. I had had a glass of wine and water with Stonor—he wanted me to have brandy and water, but I never touch it—and a few minutes after, I felt a strange sort of drowsiness come over me; I remembered no more until the clock struck ten: that I heard distinctly. Then I had the strangest impressions, like those of a nightmare, only with more of the sensation of being awake all the time: it was like being delirious and knowing quite well that I was so. Even after I got home—and Stonor had to take me there in a cab—this continued, though less painfully, through most of the night; and I felt very poorly in the morning. My uncle noticed it at once, and fancied, at least I thought so, that I had been tipsy overnight. I never felt anything like it but once before, and that was when I broke my thigh, and the doctor gave me a very strong opiate, which did anything but send me to sleep: together with the pain, it almost drove me mad. I thought I ought to tell you all this, Katie, before I asked you if I might hope, and in that hope go to my work in the world; or whether I must never think of you any more, and bear— Oh, Katie, what will you say to me?’

Katie said nothing for a moment or two, which seemed a long time to him; and then she looked up into his face, and he saw something in hers which gave him courage to come very near her, quite near enough to hear her low-toned, half-faltering, half-playful reply: ‘Indeed, Frank, I should not like you never to think of me any more.’

We need not describe his reception of her reply, nor the remainder of the interview; indeed, there would be very little to describe, for Miss Woodville returned to the room almost immediately after Katie had given him her answer.

‘You must tell my aunt,’ had been her last injunction to Frank as the door opened to admit the elder lady; and Frank certainly did not shew any disobedience to his liege-lady’s first behest.

‘Oh, Miss Woodville,’ he cried, rushing up to her and almost carrying her to her sofa, ‘I am so happy.’

And certainly, as the dear old lady listened to his tale, she did not seem to be rendered at all otherwise herself. At the council of three, which now was held, it was decided to inform Mr Fountayne of the state of affairs, without loss of time; and further, that Frank was not to suffer his uncle’s suspicions to be a great trouble, as the matter was sure to be cleared up some day.

At an unusually early hour the next morning, Mr Fountayne was announced.

‘My dear young lady,’ he began, as soon as he saw Katie, ‘my nephew has been telling me what took place between you last evening. I need not say how glad I should be, on his account, if ever this should be; but you must not act hastily. Both for his sake and your own, I say this. He lies under some suspicion with me at present, as to two circumstances.’

Katie here interrupted her visitor, to state that Frank had told her so himself.

Mr Fountayne resumed: ‘Well, so much the better. It looks honest, at all events. Still, I can’t hold him cleared. Mr Turner is a very cautious, as well as observant man, and he says he was convinced at the time that it was Frank he saw. Moreover, Stonor’s testimony—though I have good reason to doubt and dislike Stonor very deeply—is, to say the least of it, strange. Besides, there was Frank’s condition the next morning. My dear young lady, I do not like the look of the business. I have always been afraid for Frank in these very particulars. His poor father ruined himself by play, and killed himself by drink; and it’s the same blood—the same blood.’

# ‘IN MEMORIAM’—CHARLOTTE BRONTE.

ALL day across the purple heath  
Fell ceaseless lines of wintry rain,  
And all the valley-town beneath  
Was mist-hid save the belfry vane.

It rained until the mirk came down  
An hour before its wonted time,  
And gleams of light crept through the town,  
Which flickered out ere midnight chime.

Across the casement yet a-light,  
A shadow, like a pulse-beat, passed  
Out from the fire-light to the night,  
As ’twere the house-heart throbbing fast.

Ah! shadow lone! you paused the while  
A wan face peered into the gloom,  
And turning with a weary smile,  
Resumed its pacing through the room.

I wot she never saw the night,  
Or heard the plashing of the rain,  
As clasped within her fingers white,  
Her fevered forehead pressed the pane!  
She only saw those shadowy lands  
A gleam of fire-light might dispel,  
And shew between the clasping hands  
The silent room she knew so well.

She sits ’mid fern-leaves, autumn brown,  
With Emily’s soft hand in hers—  
So still and mute, the lark drops down  
Unheeding past them to the furze.

Rapt in high thoughts, they never hear  
The mastiff, whining restlessly,  
Or see the late flowers of the year  
Lie dim and fading on their knee.

Scare not the dream from out the room,  
O wailing wind! O plashing rain!  
The churchyard lies in very gloom  
Without the storm-beat window-pane.

Oh! call not back the bitter year  
Which first the sister-band dissolved;  
When, stern of face, without a tear,  
She passed—reluctant, yet resolved!  
O panting soul! which vainly strove  
To stay awhile thy spirit-flight—  
Art thou near her whose sister-love  
Years unto thee this wintry night?

Art thou, too, here? thou other one,  
With whom she sate beside the sea,  
And watched its waves flash in the sun,  
With cheek to cheek pressed tenderly.  
Upon the hearth, O dying gleam,  
Flame steadily, nor break the spell  
Which makes the past the present seem,  
And veils the moment of farewell!

A halcyon sunlit time of love  
Is coming to you, lonely heart!  
And you shall prize it, though it prove  
A bitter-sweet, ere you depart!

To pass away ’twere easier sooth!  
In the dark silence of to-night,  
Than watch the husband of your youth  
Grow dimmer in your dying sight.

The bells which blithely chimed to-night,  
Another Easter-eve will toll—  
For in this chamber, mute and white,  
Shall lie the casket of your soul;

While o’er the land, whoe’er has known  
The glowing words thy hand hath penned,  
Shall name thee in a softer tone,  
And feel as they had lost a friend.

R.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by WILLIAM ROBERTSON, 23 Upper Sackville Street, DUBLIN, and all Booksellers.